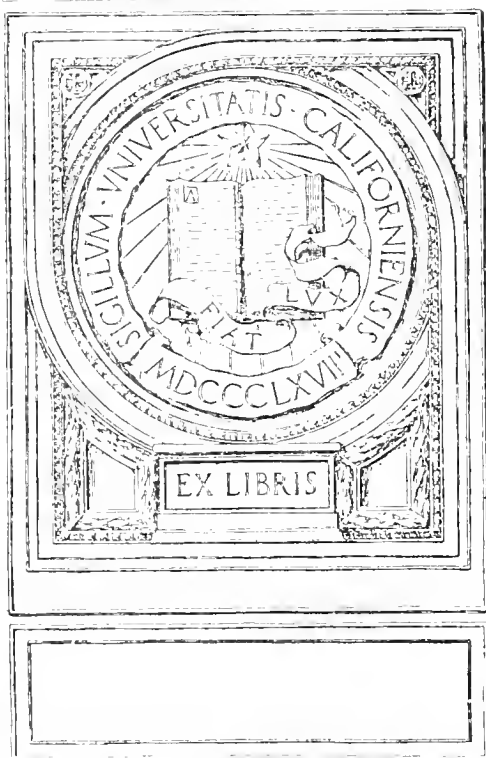


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T H E
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T H E
T H E O R I S T S.
A
S A T I R E.

B Y T H E A U T H O R
O F
M E D I C O - M A S T I X.

Nolim tamen quis putet, velle me iniquo animo *Theoricam*, tanquam rem inanem, & nullius usus hoc pacto traducere; illam enim semper maximi feci, & faciam, quâ, nimirum si careret ars medica manca esset & imperfecta, sed ea tantum mihi mens est, ut ostendam non esse illi unde tantum se efficiat, ut supra *Practicam* dominatum sibi deberi exillimet, & illi præire velit, cujus velligia olim pressit.

RAMAZZINI Oratio Nona.

It has happened very unfortunately for Physic, that the warm Imaginations of Theorists and Anatomists have represented to them many Things in themselves extremely precarious, as certain Truths; and these have been warmly embraced as contributing to the Confirmation of some favourite Systems, which their Authors were determined to establish right or wrong. Now all Reasonings whatever, from such uncertain Principles, are more likely to be prejudicial to Physic than to improve it; and I am inclined to believe, that the Misapplication of Mechanics to Medicine has done the Art of Healing more Prejudice, than a proper Use of them has done it Service. The Abuse, therefore, of mechanical Learning in Physic is highly to be condemned, as the Tinsel of the Art, which makes a Noise and Shew, without communicating any real Value.

James's Preface to his Medical Dictionary, p. 94.

BATH: PRINTED BY R. CRUTTWELL;
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M DCC LXXIV.

P R E F A C E.

I Was always of opinion, that to lag in THEORY by the head and shoulders, in the practice of physic, was as absurd as it is dangerous.

I readily confess at the same time, that THEORY is the *fine qua non* in the course of our academical studies, and of our medical pursuits: — But when the foundation is laid, and the edifice is raised — *knock down the scaffolding*.

Ubi definit Philosophus, ibi incipit Medicus, is the old adage: yet should a man, whilst he is feeling a pulse, harangue upon the nature of fluids, their increased *momenta* and velocities; or, when he is to prescribe medicines, discourse of their properties, &c. by mathematical theorems. he might indeed pass for a most wonderful and profound scholar amongst old prating nurses, and gossiping matrons, but he would most assuredly be laughed at and pitied by every good and honest physician.

I was

I was led to write the following little poem, in consequence of a sensible, pertinent, and very ingenious essay I read some time since, written by *Dr. Sims*, and communicated to the Medical Society in *London*—to which I refer the reader: he will there find this subject most copiously and very judiciously discussed.

Ubi quid datur oti
Illudo chartis—

I should be glad to please *even the criticks*, as well as my friends, and candid readers; — but I must observe, that I shall ever closely attend to my great master *Horace's* rule, when I am engaged in this way of writing — and study to have my verse *Sermoni propria* — though I may therein incur the censure of the REVIEWERS, and be considered as *a poet but distantly allied to the family of the Well-enoughs*.

T H E

T H E O R I S T S.

F R I E N D.

BE well advis'd, despise these callous men,
Nor dip indignant more in gall your pen.

P O E T.

What must I do, then? — say — (*a*)

F R I E N D.

Why, drop your rhimes. — (*b*)

(*a*) Quid faciam, præscribe.

(*b*) Quiescas.

B

Forfake

P O E T.

Forfake the Muses! — (c)

F R I E N D.

In these harden'd times,

When *Folly* and bronz'd *Impudence* prevail,

Will the sharp sting of satire ought avail?

If you must write—let BRUNSWICK be your theme, (d)

Beneath whose smiles the *Arts* and *Muses* beam

Their radiance round—the public good HIS care,

And *Britain* is—what *Rome* and *Athens* were.

P O E T.

What you advise, wou'd be my chiefest pride,

But who can write, when *genius* is denied? (e)

(c) Ne faciam inquis

Omnino versus!

(d) Aut si tantus amor scribendi te rapit, aude

Cæsaris invicti res dicere——

(e) Cupidum, pater optime, vires

Deficiunt——

O!

Oh! that my muse were as my duty strong,
 My gracious KING should then enrich my song ;
 Joyous I'd mark the glories of his throne,
 And make my name immortal as HIS OWN.
 — 'Tis not for bards like me, HIS praise to sing,
 Untun'd my harp, and yet unfledg'd my wing. (*f*)

F R I E N D.

Still, 'tis less dangerous, than to hold the glass,
 And shew *Pomposo* to the world an ass. (*g*)

P O E T.

My satire is not levell'd—

F R I E N D.

I agree ;
 Yet fools will cry, *that stroke was meant for me.*

(*f*) Neque enim quivis——

(*g*) Quanto rectius hoc——

B

P O E T.

Well—and what then?—I'm not in fault, I'll swear it,
 —If the cap fit—why even let them wear it.
 Pert *Theorists*, who dare perplex the art,
 And pedant *Blockheads* shall severely smart.
 Can I be patient when a *Coxcomb* lectures,
 And swells whole pages with his wild conjectures?
 Talks of his *plus* and *minus*, nervous juices;
 And with a Q. E. D. asserts their uses!
 Would gravely prove on *algebraic* grounds
 By what a force of many thousand pounds*
 The *muscles* jointly with the *stomach* act!
Quid tunc, most learned Sirs? — Suppose it fact!
 Lost, and bewilder'd in their airy dreams,
 By *System* puzzled, and absorb'd in schemes,
 They dwell on trifles with profound attention,
 And launch beyond all human comprehension.

* 261186 pounds.—Vide Borelli, and many other mathematico-philosophical
 Theorists, &c. &c. &c.

Will *Theory* improvement not preclude,
 And, lieu of *facts*, her *own dull whims* obtrude?
Subservient to our art—we should respect her—
 But ne'er in *Practice* must *she* rule *director*.
 Now all disorders from an *acid* rise,
 Next comes another with his *alkalies*.
 This man descants, and proves by demonstration,
 Digestion is perform'd by—*trituration*—
 A third cries no—it is by *fermentation*.
 What one denies, another still affirms;
 And who dare doubt, when *logarithm* confirms!
 Th' *Hypothesis* to day—is next forgot!
 Such is of system the uncertain lot!

Ye cannot tell me, spite of all you urge,
 Why *Opium* lulls, and why should *Rhubarb* purge?
 What gives the *Bark* its *gangrene*-checking force,
 Or stops the chilling *Intermittent's* course.

From *fool* to hope instruction, wou'd be vain—
 'Themselves unlighten'd—what can they explain?
Ignotum per ignotius!—must offend—
 How can they teach—who little understand!
 They're but the wandrings of a brain disturb'd;
 Madness, like this, should be by *Reason* curb'd.

F R I E N D.

All this is true—but yet, my friend, forbear,
 Are *Unintelligibles* worth your care?
 Let them enjoy their visionary thoughts;
 Laugh, if you please—but why expose their faults?
 They hurt nor you nor me:—give writing o'er,
 Nor make them foes, who might be friends before. (*h*)

P O E T.

When GARTH, high-favour'd by *Apollo*, writ,
 Who took Offence?—tho' wounded by his wit? (*i*)

(*h*) Ne quis amicus
 Frigore te feriat.

Tho' far unequal to so great a name,
 I stand, unnotic'd, in the roll of Fame,
 Still shall my satire dare to lash their crimes,
 Howe'er *Reviewers* criticize my rhimes ;
I scorn the praise that's purchas'd with a fee—
 And *their* dispraise—is no dispraise to me.

F R I E N D.

What mean you then ?—the science to explode ?

P O E T.

Perish that thought !—No,—I wou'd smoothe the road,
 Make strait the path, which to her temple leads,
 And pluck up all these *problematic* weeds.

Chimeric follies not the COAN taught,
 His sacred page with observation fraught :

(i) Cum est Lucilius ausus

Primus in hunc operis componere carmina aurem.

Nature,

Nature, his kind conductress and his guide,
 He follow'd close, with a becoming pride ;
 Yet not implicitly her laws obey'd—
 —He knew capricious *Nature* sometimes stray'd,
 'Twas then he call'd calm *Reason* to his aid,
 And plain *Experience*, in apparel trim,
 And shrewd *Sagacity*—the foe of *Whim*.

F R I E N D.

Reflect, dear Sir, has *Theory* no share?
She merits sure the watchful student's care.
 If *Practice* only be sufficient knowledge,
 Vain were the time bestow'd at school and college ;
 Each *plodder* of the *pharmaceutic* tribe,
 Taught by his dusty file—would dare prescribe ;
 Nor more behind his counter mix up flops :—
We have too many M. D.'s from the shops.

P O E T.

I honour *Science*, and revere the *Arts*,
 And wherefoe'er I meet acknowledg'd parts,
 They claim my warmest wishes for success:—
 But, when the man of cunning and address,
 To subtle *subterfuge* und *craft* applies,
 Shall not my bosom swell? my bile not rise?

With grave attention when your pulse he feels,
 The pedant *Chronos* to his watch appeals,
 And counts the quick successions of a stroke—
 Will not such mummary my rage provoke?
 The keen observer by the touch will know
 Whether the fever be too high, or low,
 Without this pompous folly, vain parade:—
 But now, *Deception* is become a trade.

In sweet *Philosophy's* sequester'd cell,
 Full well I know *Hygeia* loves to dwell,

To *Her* are *Phœbus* and the *Muses* known,
 They beam meridian splendor round her throne.
 From her far-searching and discerning eyes
Illusions vanish—and *chimera* flies:
She pities all the ravings of the schools,
 And every dull perplexity of fools;
 The bloated *System*, changing as the winds,
 And the crude labors of distemper'd minds;
 Her's is *true knowledge*, permanent, and fix'd,
 Her sterling metal from allay unmix'd.

And shall vain triflers, and a pedant crew,
 Mislead us from the way we should pursue?
 Or say, shall idle *Theorists* pretend
Nature's immutable decrees to mend?
 Can *algebraic numbers* ascertain
 The fever's period?—or relieve from pain?

Can

Can figures (multiply them as you please)
Describe the cause and nature of disease?

Each rising symptom, to a cautious man,
Shall give more insight—than such *Reasoners* can,
Whose thousand jarring volumes disagree,
Save in their—intricate futility.
By *these* not SYDENHAM secur'd renown,
Adorn'd his temples with the *Pythian* crown;
In *these* his youth not idly entertain'd,
And long the foremost of physicians reign'd.
Did *Lommius* theorise?—*Riccius* rave?
Their plan was not to *twangle*, but to *save*.
Each symptom they prescrib'd from *Nature's* page,
And drew disease in every different stage;
No slave to *Theory's* deceiving wiles.
Her false allurements, and her dangerous smiles,

Not hidden causes vainly they explor'd,
 But how to health mankind might be restor'd :—
 This sage *Experience* taught—*She* ne'er mistakes,
 Nor, those who listen to her voice, forsakes.

NATURE is ever steadily the same—
 If Doctors blunder—*She* is not to blame.
She, from the spring of *Truth*, her knowledge draws,
 And not from *Theory's* fantastic laws.
 Shall such *important nonsense* be endur'd !—
Mechanic powers no patients ever cur'd.

F R I E N D.

I plainly own—I've nothing to object,
 But treat the *Faculty* with some respect. (*k*)

(*k*) Equidem nihil hinc diffingere possum,

Be

Be cautious--men have failings--

P O E T.

'Tis confess'd ;

And failings such as their's must be redress'd ;

In other things, it matters not how blind--

—Here—it concerns the welfare of mankind.

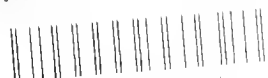
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